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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PRAGUE 000896

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [CVIS](#) [PINR](#) [EAID](#) [IZ](#) [BK](#) [EZ](#) [EUN](#)

SUBJECT: CZECH DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER KOLAR ON IRAQ
CONFERENCE, CUBA, AND BILATERAL RELATIONS

REF: A. SECSTATE 103222

[1](#)B. PRAGUE 869

Classified By: ECON OFFICER SAMSON FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D).

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: The Czech republic is promoting former Czech Ambassador to the US Alexandr Vondra to become the Special EU Representative to Bosnia, and has garnered the support of Slovakia and Poland. The Czechs are presenting a proposal on the EU on dealings with Cuba which includes development of a fund for dissidents, limitations on high-level official travel to Cuba to just foreign ministers, and a reversion to past practice of inviting Cuban dissidents to national day receptions. Kolar said that the Czechs expected to continue to provide Iraqi police training (now in Jordan and perhaps to move to the Czech Republic) and would follow-through on using development assistance budgeted for Iraq. In a discussion about visas and the road map, Kolar was reminded that the process would be a long one and that it was important not to raise false public expectations. Kolar stated that Paroubek's planned visit to NY in September would be a good opportunity for the PM to meet the President and to "balance out" Paroubek's recent visits to China and Russia, and would help keep Paroubek on course as a transatlantic partner. END SUMMARY

IRAQ
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[1](#)2. (C) During a June 10 meeting with Deputy Foreign Minister for Bilateral Affairs (and future Czech Ambassador to the US) Petr Kolar, DCM raised ref A points on the upcoming US-EU-Iraq conference. Kolar noted that FM Svoboda, who will lead the GOCR delegation, will not be announcing any new initiatives at the conference. Kolar went on to summarize current Czech assistance to Iraq: 400 million Czech Crowns (\$16 million) of development funds for 2006 and 2007, including the extension of police training in Jordan, and likely new police training in the Czech Republic. Kolar was pleased by the success story of training Iraqi diplomats in the Ministry's diplomatic academy, and they will likely offer this training again next year. He gave assurances that they would follow-through in drawing upon these budgeted assistance funds.

CUBA
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[1](#)3. (C) According to Kolar (protect), who was speaking off the record, a Czech diplomat was refused entry into Cuba several days earlier in apparent retaliation for Czech support of dissidents. He said that continued strong support for the dissidents in Cuba remains a priority for the Czech government. His forecast was that Cuba's public denouncements of the Czechs would strengthen public and governmental support for the Czech position. Kolar (protect) complained of intense pressure from Spain, including a threat to withdraw support for a Czech seat on the UN Security Council in retaliation for the CR's continued hard-line approach against Cuba. Kolar explained Czech goals for EU Cuba policy in the same terms provided earlier this week by the MFA Czech desk officer (ref B), including EU funding for dissidents, limiting high-level official travel to Cuba to foreign ministers, and inviting dissidents to national day celebrations.

EU Special Rep for Bosnia
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[1](#)4. (C) Kolar discussed GOCR efforts to get former Czech Ambassador to the US Alexandr (Sasha) Vondra selected as Special EU Representative to Bosnia. Kolar said that Poland and Slovakia had recently agreed to support Vondra's candidacy, but Hungary was opposed because it believes that this would endanger the Hungarian candidate for the Deputy Rep position. If Vondra does not get the position in Bosnia, the Czechs may put him forward for the same job in Macedonia. Kolar commented that the EU Special Rep competition with Hungary is a continuation of recent personnel rivalries with Hungary that have become a leitmotif, although Kolar was not specific.

Visas -- a Long March
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15. (C) DCM briefed Kolar on the recent meeting of the Bilateral Visa Working Group, which was very cordial and productive. DCM stressed to Kolar that the focus needs to be on more than just the refusal rates and that the Road Map is a long-term effort. Kolar took the opportunity to disavow MFA authorship of the recent European Parliament resolution critical of US visa policy toward the new EU members states. The invocation of the visa solidarity mechanism on May 26 against Canada has stirred up action from the Canadians, who are sending representatives from their Foreign Affairs and Immigration office to meet on visa issues. The Canadians are reportedly telling the Czechs that they are under pressure from the US not to eliminate the Canadian visa requirement for Czech tourists.

MFA Keen on Paroubek Visit

16. (C) Kolar took the opportunity to underscore the utility of Prime Minister Paroubek meeting with the President on the margins of the September UN Five-Year Anniversary Millennium Summit or in Washington. DCM noted that there would be a crush of visitors at that time. Kolar stated that he understood this, but stressed that Paroubek's recent visits to China and Russia need to be "balanced out" by a high-profile transatlantic meeting with the President. Deputy Secretary Zoellick's recent visit was important, but Kolar stated that it is not enough, as Gross was PM at that time.

CABANISS